

Prabuddha Bharata

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS-TALKS BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION.

(*March 18th, 1900. At Alameda, Calif.*)

We read many books, but that does not bring us knowledge. We may read all the Bibles in the world, but that will not give us religion. Theoretical religion is easy enough to get, any one may get that. What we want is practical religion.

The Christian idea of a practical religion is in doing good works—worldly utility.

What good is utility? Judged from a utilitarian standpoint, religion is a failure. Every hospital is a prayer that more people may come there. What is meant by charity? Charity is not fundamental. It is really helping on the misery of the world, not eradicating it. One looks for name and fame, and covers his efforts to obtain them with the enamel of charity and good works. He is working for himself under the pretext of working for others. Every so-called charity is encouragement of the very evil it claims to operate against.

Men and women go to balls and dance all night in honour of some hospital or other charitable institution, then go home, behave

like beasts, and bring devils into the world to fill jails, insane asylums and hospitals. So it goes on, and it is called good works,—building hospitals etc. The ideal of good works is to lessen, or eradicate, the misery of the world. The Yogi says, all misery comes from not being able to control the mind. The Yogi's ideal is freedom from nature. Conquest of nature is his standard of work. The Yogi says that all power is in the soul, and by the controlling of the mind and body one conquers nature by the power of the soul.

Every ounce of muscle in excess of what is beyond the needs of one's physical work, is that much less of brain. Do not exercise too hard, it is injurious. The one who does not work hard will live the longest. Eat less food and work less. Store up brain food.

Household work is enough for women.

Do not make the lamp burn fast, let it burn slowly.

Proper diet means simple diet, not highly spiced.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

BHOGA and Tyaga—going in for the pleasures of life and transcending them—are two old terms round which much controversy is apt to rage now-a-days among people whose minds stand at the crossing of the new and the old ways of thinking. The modern mind takes a particular delight in intellectual feats of reconciling opposites. So here is a pair of opposites, Bhoga and Tyaga; and the bold claim has gone forth that their reconciliation has been achieved, spiritually as well as intellectually.

But the announcement is no news at all. For that is exactly what the generality of men succeed in doing, more or less, all over the world. Every day of their life, aye almost every moment, they reconcile Bhoga and Tyaga. The very orbit of social life is described as the resultant of two forces, the one of Bhoga and the other of Tyaga. And the pre-historic Rishi* who insists on the glory of a life of hundred summers and invokes Fire to lead man to new glories beyond that life upholds the same general principle when giving out his famous injunction—*तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः*, "so enjoy in a spirit of renunciation." So our Rishis of to-day simply echo the re-assuring voice of many a Rishi of the past, and where is the originality in their claim?

But if there is no originality in the truth of the reconciliation, there is originality with a vengeance in the way it is made to carry within itself an implied side-thrust. This sting of an implied protest is a new thing, a modern development. But protest against whom? Against whom is the onset aimed? Against none but some wind-mill of some Don Quixote,

or better, of some Sancho Panzas! For actually there is none on the field who ever resented the reconciliation of Bhoga and Tyaga in the life of men in this world or any other. The modern revival of monasticism under the banner of renunciation never offered itself as a movement hostile to such reconciliation as a fact or an ideal in human life. The Sannyasins may be trusted to know that Bhoga must remain a necessary factor in life so long as the five sheaths of matter and force are superimposed on Pure Consciousness, so long as, that is to say, there is embodiment in any of its forms, gross, subtle or causal.

न वै सगरीरस्य सतः प्रियाप्रिययोरपहतिरस्ति ।
अगरीरं वाव सन्तं न प्रियाप्रिये स्पृशतः ।

"For the embodied being, the relativity of the agreeable and the disagreeable does not cease. Only the disembodied being is not affected by that relativity." So Bhoga can never be eliminated from the life of men.

And the whole trend of social and religious ordinances and injunctions with which man's life has been sought to be regulated from times immemorial is expressed in the old Sanskrit saying: *प्रवृत्तिरेषा भूतानां निवृत्तिस्तु महाफला*,—the natural tendency of man is so and so, but the giving up thereof is attended with good far-reaching results. The institution of marriage, for example, is a positive step towards the giving up of the natural sexual laxity of brute-life. Throughout the whole scale of human progress in this way, it is not Bhoga really but its natural domination over life that is sought to be progressively negatived, for Bhoga remains all along, as we have said, an indispensable factor in human nature. All the fivefold sheaths of consciousness are themselves constituted by Bhoga, and it is only because there

* *Ashvameyapanchat.*

is something more in the human self than what belongs to these five sheaths that an irresistible current of being is set up in him which seeks to transcend them one by one. *Nivritti*, *Tyaga* or the ideal of renunciation implies this transcending current in life.

It is as if the natural, inevitable contents of life are sought to be brought under the operation of a master principle. These contents of life are of *Bhoga* and the principle is that of *Tyaga*. This principle derives itself from a persisting sense of a beyond of *Bhoga*, so that so long as there is *Bhoga*, so long its regulative counterpart, the sense of a beyond, persists and when there is no *Bhoga*, there is no *Tyaga* either. Thus *Bhoga* and *Tyaga* are correlated to each other, one as the content of embodied existence, the other as the principle of transcending it, one as the descending current of *Avidya* nature, the other as the ascending current of *Vidya* nature, the two together making up the shining stream of life. The body, moreover, has been called the *Bhogāyatana*, the abode of *Bhoga*, and the indispensable condition of all *Bhoga* is man's self-identification with body,—gross, subtle or 'causal. Now *Tyaga* implies the conscious power of counteracting this self-identification, and as the latter constitutes a given fact of human life, a matter of course taken for granted, the ideal of developing the counteracting force has been mentioned in all systems of spiritual discipline as the doctrine of *Tyaga*, and not as that of "*Tyaga* and *Bhoga* reconciled." For although, as we find in some *Upanishad*, consciousness proceeds like a leech in attaching itself to a higher body before detaching itself from a lower one, the conscious effort on the part of the individual is essentially that of *Tyaga*, and not of reconciling *Tyaga* and *Bhoga*.

This concomitance of *Bhoga* in a higher body with *Tyaga* from a lower one does not, however, consummate the process. Had it

done so, we could have justified ourselves in naming the whole process psychologically as one of reconciling *Tyaga* and *Bhoga*. So far as the concomitance of *Tyaga* and *Bhoga* holds good, the term reconciliation may be admissible in a sense. But seeing that the process of *Tyaga* never really stops short so long as there is any residuum of *Bhoga* in any of the threefold bodies, to call the whole process by the name of reconciliation is a misnomer. The *Vedas* declare, and the highest spiritual experience of man corroborates, that there is some truth beyond the life of *Tyaga* and *Bhoga*, some realisation which witnesses the absolute resolution of the two opposing forces, so that when a man of this highest illumination lives amongst us his life can never be defined in the terms of *Tyaga* or *Bhoga*, of either or both. For having once transcended the life of effort through the final neutralisation of *Bhoga* and *Tyaga* by each other, the man of supreme illumination lives an undefinable life of peace open every moment to the access of the highest experience of Absolute Truth but beyond all real reaction from the general flux of life with its two cross-currents of *Vidya* and *Avidya*. So in his case, we do not see a reconciliation of *Bhoga* and *Tyaga* but a reaching beyond that plane of polarised life, of antagonising life-currents.

The great ideal for man, therefore, is not any reconciliation between *Bhoga* and *Tyaga*, but a transcendence of both, and so long as this ideal is not realised, all the weight of religious endeavour must be thrown on the side of *Tyaga* so that it may never cease to neutralise the force of *Bhoga* which always holds us subject to itself as a matter of course even when our body-consciousness is reduced to the divine tenuity of the cosmic causal bliss. In many a life, renunciation may seem for a while to stop short here in this highest stage of body-consciousness, but such a height of human capacity is not the measure

of the highest truth. And when we have in the present age the clear verbal testimony of the highest state of perfect bodilessness, of the final *nirvana* of all egoism, of life beyond Bhoga and Tyaga lived out of the Absolute Consciousness, all the present-day theories of an ultimate harmony of Bhoga and Tyaga are bound to sound like the "discovery of a cowshed of horses," as Sri Ramakrishna used to characterise such philosophisings. So long as man has any body, Bhoga must be for him ubiquitous, but that does not mean that Tyaga must therefore admit of being reconciled to Bhoga as a finality. In fact there is no finality for Tyaga unless and until there is finality for Bhoga, and both vanish together. But they never vanish as opposing forces in the case of any man who has not yet attained to the highest illumination. Therefore to preach that the opposition, the transcending effort, vanishes even before the attainment of the highest in religion is to palm on men something like a mischievous doctrine which serves to obscure an important issue in human life.

We have already defined Tyaga as a principle which we apply on our Bhoga, a principle grounded on a sense of the beyond of Bhoga. Now let us analyse the operation of this principle, so that the definition may be clearer. Bhoga belongs either to the senses, or to the mind, or to the Buddhi (intellection) or to the causal body. Besides the general tendency of Bhoga to slide down along the scale of these centres by materialising itself more and more, there is, we may say, a special tendency, whenever we enjoy at any centre, to make us *unduly* attached to that centre—undue in the sense of making us neglect the claims and the good of other centres higher than the one concerned, (and the good of each centre may be defined to consist in proving itself as easily and fully as possible the stepping-stone to the higher centres). Both these self-materialising and

enslaving tendencies of Bhoga are resisted and conquered by the principle of Tyaga which by superinducing a sense of its beyond on every fact of Bhoga keeps up the upward direction of our life's interests. This essential function of Tyaga is implied in all the various statements of the doctrine,—the *Karmaphala-tyaga* (giving up of the fruits of action) or the *Krishnārpanam* (the offering of them to Krishna) of the Gita and the *tyaktena bhunjithā* (enjoy through renunciation) of the Rishi in the Upanishad. Tyaga in this way effects what is really a transubstantiation of Bhoga and it greatly obscures the duties of man to say that Bhoga is to be bodily taken up and reconciled to Tyaga.

By a further analysis of facts it is easy to see that sensuous Bhoga varies in man according as he is differently stationed in life. At no time in this world there is any equality in the Bhoga of men. Both in points of richness and intensity, Bhoga differs in different men, and this difference may be the result both of past Karma and of choice. But these limitations and variations are not really prejudicial to the pursuit by every man of his ultimate spiritual well-being along the path of Tyaga, for he has to exercise Tyaga not only with regard to the actual objects of his Bhoga in the sensuous plane but also with regard to all possible objects of Bhoga that wait for him in the other higher planes of life. So every man, however much his sensuous Bhoga may vary in this life, must have to face the fullest richness of Bhoga in some form or other along his path of Tyaga. Therefore, if on the strength of his past Karma and of his choice in the present life, a man is found to have his sensuous Bhoga limited to such objects as exclude, for example, sex and mammon,—of all objects of Bhoga the strongest and the most far-reaching in their entangling tendencies,—we cannot say that the principle of Tyaga in his case is abnormally robbed of any measure of its

significance or reality. The fuller self-consecration of such a man to Tyaga does not involve any less struggle on his part, prospective and retrospective, neither, consequently, any less richness in spiritual achievement. Rather his form of Tyaga constitutes an eloquent testimony to the truth of a transcendental life of supreme illumination beyond the thrice-planed life of Bhoga.

The modern cry of "Tyaga and Bhoga reconciled" has really nothing to recommend it but the cheap merit of novelty. If it is maintained, as seems to be the case with one particular wing of this new-fangled school of thought, that there is no truth beyond the causal plane of existence where the divine cosmic consciousness is ultimately realised and that the Saguna Brahman is the highest truth, the Nirguna aspect being a mere subordinate phase, this issue really resolves into a renewal of the old controversy between non-dualism and dualism, the Adwaita and the variously qualified Dwaita of the old Indian philosophy. But it is characteristic of these advocates of "Bhoga and Tyaga reconciled" to confuse life after the Adwaita realisation as lived in the causal plane with life before that realisation lived in the same plane. They do not properly distinguish the former from the latter and therefore fall into the error of characterising it in the terms of Bhoga and Tyaga. This projection of the features of a life yet to be perfected into a life that is already perfected by the final surrender to absolute consciousness and bliss lies at the very root of their new doctrines about the reconciliation of Bhoga and Tyaga, which they want to apply to the service of their country and of humanity. But for the practical purposes of such service, the thoroughly self-consistent doctrine of Tyaga as implied in the old institution of Sannyasa in our country is quite adequate, and critics have yet to show even one instance from us moderns who in the intense activity and

beneficence of his life can even approach the many silent but real makers of Indian history whom this time-honoured institution gave to our country.

There is yet another wing to this new wave of enthusiasm for Bhoga and Tyaga reconciled, where may be seen the curious phenomenon of monastic names and appendages foisted on the pretended family-life of the old Rishi of the forest. This combination of the two senses in which the word Swami is used in current vernaculars is a bold innovation which has surely the merit of defeating all the classic buffooneries of the world, and an invasion of the institution of Sannyasa under the name of ancient Rishihood is enough to send the holy shade of the latter weeping over the reckless poignancy of the practical joke! In the face of this new phenomenon, matter-of-fact people in Bengal are quite at a loss whether to congratulate the old monasticism of India on its securing at last a wonderful breeding-ground for itself or to congratulate the world of Hindu culture and thought on its wonderfully supine, patience and accommodating spirit! Anyhow the impossible seems at last to have happened, and Sannyasins held in dalliance by wives and children are going to be an interesting fixture in the humdrum Bengalee life of the twentieth century. The *gharbāṭi* sects are lifted now from the infamy of their permitted apostacy by this bare-faced vindication and the hoary institution of Sannyasa is relieved of its cumbrous differentiae. We draw attention to this new development, not because we distrust any vein of religious sincerity that may underlie this innovation but because it forms a glaring instance of the logical conclusion to which the doctrine of Bhoga and Tyaga reconciled is evidently liable to carry us. Nobody ever insisted from within the fold of our ancient monasticism that all men are required to give up in the sense a Sannyasīn gives up the life of the world.

The distinction is inevitably based on a greater or lesser degree of self-consecration and concentration of life exclusively for the higher spiritual ideals of man. But no wonder that in the present age of iconoclastic follies, an institution based on that inevitable dis-

tingtion from times immemorial and conserving for a glorious future of our country the essential spiritual heritage of scores of shining centuries should have to feel on itself for a while the rough hasty hand of an unthinking religious vandalism.



THE TWO VIEWS OF LIFE.

IN India we have at present two conflicting views of life. The view that is articulate and aggressive belongs to the scientific West and the other belongs to the voiceless past of India, obscured and stifled by the failings and frailties of a self-oblivious inertia.

The difference in the two views of life rises from a fundamental difference in the conception of the human personality. The Indian view of life is based on a primary doctrine of Atman as the real man. It takes something noumenal as the reality of life, while the Western view is based on something phenomenal as the reality of life. The latter has developed a doctrine of the knowing, feeling, willing mind as the real man, and this very mind the Indian view explains as the apparent man. Here lies the fundamental distinction from which all the main points of difference in the two views of life derive themselves.

All the prevalent schools of thought in India—those of monism, qualified monism and dualism,—would set down the Western idea of man as a halting conception, as a recognition not of the real man but of the apparent man, the man of the senses and the intellect and not man as Atman lying beyond sensuous and intellectual phenomena. The human Atman even of the Indian dualists partakes of the noumenal nature of the Divine Atman. But in the Western view of life, this noumenal self of man is never practically taken into account, and although speculations about such a

noumenal self have obtained in a few systems of Western philosophy, these speculations have practically nothing to do with that ruling view of life which supports and regulates human pursuits and achievements in the West.

For the West is essentially scientific, and not philosophical. Ever since science took the lead in re-stating and interpreting the phenomena of life in the West, it has been imposing its own method more and more on the thoughts and sentiments of men, and the observation and generalisation of such facts as report themselves to the human intellect through the inlets of the senses have steadily and thoroughly superseded the introspective process which gradually resolves the mind or the intellect into the consciousness of something beyond both. Thus the scientific method dealing absolutely with the phenomenal has given to the Western consciousness a view of life that is phenomenal.

If you ask the practical Western mind as to what is the noumenal thing in the phenomena of life, the most consistent reply forthcoming would be that the life of the whole humanity on earth is the everlasting substratum which grows and intensifies as the result of the phenomena of life on earth, individual and collective. In the absence of some immutable, noumenal fact lying beyond phenomena, human thought naturally seeks to fall back on a substitute, and the substitute is usually provided by a summation of the phenomenal. This life of humanity on earth

is therefore the logical outcome of the necessity which Western thought feels of supplementing its exclusively phenomenal view of man and his life with something approaching the nature of a noumenon. But alas, this idea of humanity is too large, too theoretical for the generality of human minds, practically looking very little further ahead than the country which environs his pursuits of life. So men in general in the West have come to interpret humanity in the concrete terms of their own country's interests, and every people have learnt to think and believe that they live best for the humanity at large. The real humanity in this way has been swallowed up in the nationality of each nation, every one of whom swears by the name of humanity even in the very act of tearing up humanity into pieces!

This building up of a vast system of culture and civilisation on the sandy foundation of the phenomena of life, the unfolding but evanescent means of life, instead of life itself,—on the false basis of the apparent man instead of the real man,—constitutes the great error of the Western view of life. Western science is powerless to rectify this error. For science cannot see beyond the phenomena, the means of life to life itself, and the rectifying method of science would always consist in the manipulation of these phenomena and means occupying the surface of life, while all true reformation comes only with a change in the noumenal springs of life, with an appeal to the real man, his Atman.

This impotence of the biological, sociological and political sciences of the West therefore has to be acknowledged. It has to be recognised that the phenomena of life do not constitute all the reality of life. They are at best means that require to be governed in their pursuit and multiplication by some higher end, the reality of life, the Atman, that transcends the phenomenal outlook of life on earth, the life between birth and death. We have to recognise that these

means of life, creating themselves out of the resources and activities of the body with its senses and the willing, feeling and knowing mind of man, have a utility that points to the real man, the Atman that exists beyond the life between birth and death on earth, so that if this life is made to usurp all the uses of the means, such uses become, really abuses which cannot but prove fatal to the lasting interests of man on earth. The modern scientific doctrine of a "fuller, richer life" on earth tends only to perpetuate such abuse of the means of life. And before men are taught in any country to improve their means of life, they require to be taught first that their real interest lies beyond those means and therefore they should not be bent on multiplying these means at the expense of the deeper attitude of devotion to their real interest in life. Rather than fall off from this central attitude in life, cling to the ideal of plain living at any cost, scornful, if necessary, of the blind rush towards a "fuller, richer life" on earth. This ideal of contentment, which serves to limit the endless multiplication of the means of life to the actual needs of our problem of making the apparent man a firm, steady stepping-stone for the ascent to the real man or the Atman,—that real problem of life on earth, that is to say, which consists in making the phenomena of life yield us its noumenal reality,—aye, this ideal of contentment is the only solution of the great riddle, the world-Sphinx who holds us all in her grip.

This ideal of contentment is the basic ideal in that wonderful scheme of life which India evolved long ago as the Magna Charta of her immortality on earth. The Indian view of life looks beyond the mere phenomena of life embracing within itself its noumenal reality. As a consequence, it reserves all its real emphasis for the latter, using the former simply as the means of realising the latter. Such being the general principle underlying the Indian scheme of life, it will not be difficult to follow its essential features as

worked out in history. Let us briefly* indicate some of these distinguishing features of the Indian scheme of life.

Religion naturally occupies the position of the governing end in the Indian scheme of life, for the realisation of the noumenal self, the Atman, the reality which gives all its meaning and significance to the phenomenal aspect of life must form the main current in and through all the pursuits of man, according to the view of life India has all along been taking. Religion has therefore been called the pursuit of the *paramārtha*, the supreme end, the other ends of life, social, educational, political, economical and so on, being defined, evaluated and governed with a view to make their pursuit subservient to that of religion. Not as one of the various concerns of man, as in the modern West, having its own allotted sphere as one of the many determining factors in life,—a sphere allotted by some social or political governing end,—but as the governing end itself, as the one supreme concern of man, religion in India has to create, foster and guide every sphere of human pursuit, so that all the concerns of man may unfailingly converge towards leading him from the outlying sectors of life to its central core of reality, from his apparent self to his real self.

Social progress, for example, in the Indian scheme of life means not the growing efficiency and freedom of each man in pursuing his happiness on earth, physical and intellectual, but rather his growing efficiency and freedom in making his social life conducive to the central purpose of his society, the spiritual purpose, namely, of leading men back to their real self. The scale of social worth is not determined by any measure of earthly possessions, and the wealthiest man may have to wait in service upon the poorest man in

the society. Material pomp and power is no indication of exalted social worthiness. What actually raises men in social worth and recognition is that inner spiritual growth in them by virtue of which they are more *socially* efficient and more *socially* free,—socially efficient because they bring out a greater self-identification with the central spiritual purpose of society, and socially free because they are more capable of rising above the trammels of material pursuits for the sake of that greater self-identification. Social advantages based on such social worth and recognition do not stoop to carry with themselves material advantages and any claims of interdining and intermarriage should have no relevancy to them, for such claims are adjusted not on any principle of gradation as to the high or the low in social worth, but on purely eugenic principles which have no bearing on individual social worth. A pariah saint, for instance, will occupy a very high position in the scale of social worth commanding the reverence and worship of all men in society and wielding great influence on the lives of men, but he will not stoop to claim as part of that reverence and worship any material advantages or any such intimacies of physical intercourse with other people as are determined by purely eugenic principles to belong to birth. It was the degraded Brahmins who first confused these eugenic considerations with those of social worth and esteem, priding themselves upon their birth as if birth in any way determined social efficiency and freedom. As a result, their own confusion has created a general confusion in the minds of all classes as to the real standpoint of estimating social worth and excellence, and birth which they in their pride set up as the signpost of social honour is being sought to be pulled down as being a wrong index of privileges which it really is. Both the action and the reaction in this case have proceeded on wrong hypotheses, for social rules and customs founded on the eugenic laws of

*For fuller discussions of these different features, the reader is referred to other numbers of this journal.

birth, marriage and inter-dining have got absolutely nothing to do with social principles determining the scale of social worth, efficiency or freedom. In the formation of society in ancient India, both of the two sets of principles were sought to be applied and every student of the Hindu society should remember that divisions and sub-divisions of caste are essentially eugenic and occupational, and such groups as develop social efficiency in the sense explained above have always to be raised in the social scale. All along the course of Indian history, many Sudra groups have in this way been admitted into the *traivarnika* scale, and he who stands against such a natural process of absorption by groups proving socially efficient is as great an enemy of the country as he who goes in for laying a violent, destructive hand on society on the strength and authority of Western social ideals. If the life of the Hindu society can first be made to flow full and healthy along the main current of its vital spiritual interests and achievements, then great constructive forces are bound to be set in operation and these forces will be strong enough to meet and absorb even all the destructive changes that may be rung on society by any extremist policy, provided the fundamental condition of recognising our religion as the governing end in the pursuit of our social life is never lost sight of.

The economic sphere in the Indian scheme of life is governed as well by religion as the supreme end, the thing of supreme value. The production of wealth is a master passion in human nature and how strong must be the influence of religion on it so as to predispose it towards the ideal of plain living for the sake of spiritual realisations. The wealthy men in ancient India vied with one another in putting their money to religious purposes and the highest religious merit of a king consisted in giving away the whole of his stored-up wealth as the closing glory of a sacrificial ceremony. Thus

distribution of wealth became as necessary a process in social life as the production thereof. Wealth for the sake of spending in religious observances including Yajnas as well as good public works became the general rule of life, and wealth for the sake of wealth constituted culpable exceptions. The ideal in society was always such as to prevent the treasures of the earth from rising superior in the estimation of men to treasures of heaven, and an atmosphere of covetousness could never diffuse itself over the general industrious life of the people. The simplicity of village life was the bed-rock on which the whole economics of the country was founded and the providing of machineries and factories that go hand in hand with covetousness was never encouraged. As economic life grew along the trend and current of religious sanction, the modern competition of capital and labour could be deliberately excluded, while the production among people of food and other necessities sufficient for purposes of an easy life of spiritual culture was made obligatory. So long as this old authority over economic life is assured to religion, the modest old economic ideals may yet be made to suit the conditions of modern competition between one country and another, for protective economic customs and usages created by religion may be as strong to keep unnecessary products of foreign trade out of the market as the protective laws of any political state. It is always better to have people do for themselves things which a state may do for them by legislation. And in India the vital secret of collective life has always been to teach people to do out of religious considerations things which in other countries the state enforces through political legislation.

And this brings us to the question of politics as a part of the Indian scheme of life. The state in India had its prescribed *swadharma*s or duties, as the subjects of the state had theirs. These duties imposed by the authority of religion went to the making of

all the politics of the country. This politics constituted a subordinate sphere in the whole scheme of national life inasmuch as it neither had to define or determine the one immanent end of that life nor had to allot, regulate or govern all the other spheres of that life. All these determinative and regulative functions belonged to religion, and politics had simply to maintain against internal and external obstacles and obstructions the organisation of life and its duties which religion had brought into operation, the expenses of such maintenance being met from taxes. The state therefore existed simply for maintaining a system and not for working it out. The people themselves under the leading of their religion worked out their own system of life, and for such workings out, their own Swadharmanas or duties of life gave them the motive force. This capacity to live their own life without much state-reliance has always been the unique glory of the Indian people, and if they never have been organised to stand together as a political nation competing with other nations in the race for wealth and political power, that is because the aim and mission of their national life has always been lying elsewhere, that is because they have always been taught to see through the vanities of wealth and power and live for teaching other peoples to see the same way. So they can never be made to accept the vain, competitive, selfish and ambitious politics of other nations. They ask nothing more of their modern educated countrymen than their prompt, sincere help in the re-organising of their own system of political life on a self-conscious basis, and they ask nothing more of the sovereign state established by the English in India than a sincere readiness to maintain and protect this their own system of political life which they badly require now to re-organise with the help of the educated classes. If this voiceless prayer of the proletariat, a prayer rising from the very soul of India, is heard by the

educated classes and the ruling power in the country, all the problems of India may yet be solved. But unfortunately both the state and the classes in India are blindly bent upon imposing on the masses a borrowed political system which is fatally alien to the very trend and texture of their own life and over which both have created between themselves an endless quarrel!

And just as the people in India have their own politics inseparably bound up with the view and scheme of life to which they have been inalienably committed by scores of centuries standing behind them as the arbiters of their future, so have they their own system of education. Have they not much to complain against in a borrowed system of education which has sold away all the intelligence of the classes to the luxuries of town life, snatching them off from their midst and inflicting undreamt-of wretchedness on the very soul of their rural life, the very life-principle of Indian nationality? Should they not curse a monstrous system of education that has treacherously alienated the minds of their educated leaders from that scheme of culture and civilisation to which their own life has been irrevocably entrusted by the silent but sustained constructive efforts of a long, irrevocable past? And the irony is glaringly heightened when this very system of education is magnanimously sought to be imposed on the masses to reclaim them from the miserable degradation of an unmitigated illiteracy! True education always consists in self-education, and no people in the world can have any education superinduced on them from above. So why should the principle be departed from only in India? Why should not the people in India be left to work out their own system of education conformably to their own national ideal, provided such conformity does not tend to antagonise with the real interests of the sovereign state which has simply to maintain and protect the system? It is evident from documentary

sources that the British government in India introduced their own system of education primarily for providing and keeping up a supply of English-educated men for their offices. If the same object could be attained by past governments in India without the necessity of interfering with the self-education of the people in their own ideals of life and culture on their own national lines, there can be no justification for the present government in seeking to force on the people a foreign system of education which, again, cannot but tend to create a political Frankenstein impossible to allay. If you interfere to educate the people on your own lines, you cannot but end by firing them with the exotic enthusiasm of your own Western politics, but if you interfere simply to protect and supervise a system of education which the people have to work out in conformity with their own scheme of life, you may not only expect to have the requisite supply of men for your services, but will have the further satisfaction of helping the revival of a politics among the people which would never militate against your political sovereignty in India in the way the adoption of Western politics is bound to do, however much sought to be diluted by the diplomatic virtue of words. So it is quite plain as to where the choice should lie. But the fact is that the educated classes in India are for the while so obstinately imbued with Western politics in preference to the real politics of the country that every cry that they raise now for national education sounds suspicious in official ears, and until this artificial state of things is changed, real educational movements among the people on truly national lines have to wait. But it lies with our educated people themselves, and partly with the Government no doubt, to minimise this delay.

The Indian view and scheme of life, therefore, awaits now re-acceptance even at the hands of the sons of India herself in modern times, what to speak of its recognition in

other countries of the world. For unless India rises to work out her own view of life, it is useless to expect that other nations will pay any real heed to its good points so as to supplement by them their own halting conceptions and schemes of life. First practise what you profess before you go to preach them to others. First put your own house in order before you walk out to point out why other people's houses suffer from disorder. The real task of the seers to whom the truth of the Indian nationalism has been vouchsafed by God lies here in India, and may such fortunate individuals seek without delay to bring themselves together and compare notes that their energies may not fritter away or go to sleep!

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

CXXI.

30th November, 1894.

Dear and beloved,

Your beautiful letter just came to hand. I am so glad that you have come to know Sri Ramakrishna. I am very glad at the strength of your Vairagya. It is the one primary necessity in reaching God. I had always great hopes for Madras and still I have the firm belief that from Madras will come the spiritual wave that will deluge India. I can only say Godspeed to your good intentions, but here, my son, are the difficulties. In the first place, no man ought to take a hasty step. In the second place, you must have some respect for the feelings of your mother and wife. True you may say that *we*, the disciples of Ramakrishna, had not always shown great deference to the opinions of our parents. I know and know for sure that great things are done only by great sacrifices. I know for certain that India

requires the sacrifice of her highest and best and I sincerely hope that it will be your good fortune to be one of them.

Throughout the history of the world you find great men make great sacrifices and the mass of mankind enjoy the benefit. If you want to give up everything for your own salvation, it is nothing. Do you want to forego even your own salvation for the good of the world? You are a God, think of that. My advice to you is to live the life of a Brahmacharin i.e., giving up all sexual enjoyments for a certain time live in the house of your father, this is the "Kutichaka" stage. Try to bring your wife to consent to your great sacrifice for the good of the world. And if you have burning faith and all-conquering love and almighty purity I do not doubt that you will shortly succeed. Give yourself body and soul to the work of spreading the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, for work (Karma) is the first stage. Study Sanskrit diligently as well as practise devotion. For you are to be a great teacher of mankind and my Guru Maharaj used to say, 'A pen-knife is sufficient to commit suicide with but to kill others one requires guns and swords.' And in the fullness of time it will be given unto you when to go forth out of the world and preach His sacred name. Your determination is holy and good. Godspeed to you but do not take any hasty step. First purify yourself by work and devotion. India has suffered long, the religion eternal has suffered long. But the Lord is merciful. Once more He has come to help His children, once more the opportunity is given to rise to fallen India. India can only rise by sitting at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna. His life and His teachings are to be spread far and wide, are to be made to penetrate every pore of Hindu society. Who will do it? Who are to take up the the flag of Ramakrishna and march for the salvation of the world? Who are to stem the tide of degeneration at the sacrifice of name and fame, wealth and enjoyment—

may of every hope of this or other worlds? A few young men have jumped in the breach, have sacrificed themselves. They are a few, we want a few thousands of such as they and *they will come*. I am glad that our Lord has put it in your mind to be one of them. Glory unto him on whom falls the Lord's choice. Your determination is good, your hopes are high, your aim is the noblest in the world—to bring millions sunk in darkness to the light of the Lord.

But, my son, here are the drawbacks. Nothing shall be done in haste. Purity, patience and perseverance are the three essentials to success and above all *love*. All time is yours, there is no indecent haste. Everything will come right if you are pure and sincere. We want hundreds like you bursting upon society and bringing new life and vigour of the Spirit wherever they go. Godspeed to you.

Yours, with all blessings,

Vivekananda.

CXXII.

7th October, '96.

C/o Miss Muller,

Airlie Lodge,

Ridgeway Gardens,

Wimbledon, England.

Once more in London, dear Joe Joe, and the classes have begun already. Instinctively I looked about for one familiar face which never had a line of discouragement, never changed, but always helpful, cheerful and strengthening—and in my mind conjured up that face before me, in spite of a few thousand miles of space. For what is space in the realm of spirit? Well, you are gone to your home of rest and peace—for me, ever-increasing mad work—yet I have your blessings with me always, have I not?

My natural tendency is to go into a cave, and be quiet, but a fate behind pushes me

forward and I go. Who ever could resist fate?

Why did not Christ say in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are they that are always cheerful and always hopeful for they have already the Kingdom of Heaven?" I am sure He must have said it, He with the sorrows of a whole world in His heart, He who likened the saintly soul with the child,—but it was not noted down; of thousand things they noted down only one, I mean remembered.

I now live mostly on fruits and nuts, they seem to agree with me well. If ever the old doctor with "land" up somewhere, comes to see you, you may confide to him this secret. I have lost a good deal of my fat, but on days I lecture, I have to go on solid food. How is H—? I never saw a sweeter boy. May all blessings ever attend him through life!

I hear your friend C— is lecturing on Zoroastrian philosophy—surely the stars are not smiling on him. What about your Miss A—? And our Y—? What news about the brotherhood of the Z Z Z's? And our Miss (forgotten!)? I hear that half a ship-load of Hindus and Buddhists and Mahommedans and brotherhoods and what not have entered the U. S. and another cargo of Mahatma-seekers, evangelists &c. have entered India!! Good. India and the U. S. seem to be the two countries for religious enterprise. Have a care, Joe, this heathen corruption is dreadful. I met Madame S— in the street to-day. She does not come any more to my lectures. Good for her. Too much of philosophy is not good.

Do you remember that lady who used to come to every meeting too late to hear a word, but buttonholed me immediately after and kept me talking, till a battle of Waterloo would be raging in my internal economy through hunger? She came, they are all coming and more, that is cheering.

Most of our friends came—one of the G—s,

too, the married daughters. Mrs. G— could not come to-day, it was a very short notice. We have a hall now, a pretty big one holding about two hundred or more. There is a big corner which will be fitted up as a library. I have another man from India now to help me.

I enjoyed Switzerland immensely, also Germany. Prof. Deussen was very kind, we came together to London and had great *fun* here. Prof. Max Muller is very friendly too. In all, the English work is becoming *solid* and respected too, seeing that great scholars are sympathising. Probably I will go to India this winter with some English friends. So far about my own sweet self.

Now, what about the holy Family? Everything is going on first rate, I am sure. You must have heard of F— by this time. I am afraid, I rather made him dejected the day before he sailed, by telling him that he cannot marry M— until he begins to earn good deal money!! Is M— with you now? Give her my love. Also give me your present address.

How is Mother? F—, same solid sterling gold as ever, I am sure.

A— working at her music and languages, and laughing a good deal, and eating a good many apples as usual, by the bye?

It is getting late in the night, so good night Joe. (Is strict etiquette to be followed in New York too?) and Lord bless you ever and ever.

* * * *

Ever yours with love and blessings,

Vivekananda.

P. S.

Mr. and Mrs. S— in whose house (flat) I am writing now send their kindest regards.

V.



CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

VIII—*Concluded.*

[Place: Calcutta. Year: 1897.]

Subjects: *Talk on the real nature of meditation and its objects. The mind can be concentrated with the help of external objects.—Even for the concentrated mind of a spiritual devotee desires may arise owing to previous deep-rooted impressions.—As an outcome of the concentrated mind the possibility of various powers and of a consciousness of Brahman is opened up for the devotee.—If he is led on by any desires at that time, then, he cannot attain to the knowledge of Brahman.*]

When, after this, all who were present seated themselves near Swamiji, he asked the disciple to speak something on Upanishad texts. Never before had the disciple made any speech before Swamiji, and his heart went pit-a-pit! But Swamiji was not the man to let him off. So the disciple stood up and went on explaining the text: पराञ्चि खानि व्यसृजन् स्वयम्भूः—"The self-created One projected the senses as out-going organs." And after describing the great efficacy of renunciation and devotion to Guru and concluding that the knowledge of Brahman is the *summum bonum* of man, he resumed his seat. With repeated clappings of his hands, Swamiji, to encourage the disciple, said, "Oh! how nicely spoken!"

Swamiji then asked Suddhananda, Prakashananda and others to speak something. Swami Suddhananda made a short speech on Dhyana (meditation), and after Swami Prakashananda and others had done the same thing one after another, Swamiji rose and came out to the parlour of the house. There was yet an hour left before dusk. When all had assembled there Swamiji told them to put him any question any might have in his mind.

Swami Suddhananda asked, "What is the real nature of Dhyana, Sir?"

Swamiji.— Dhyana is the focussing of the mind on some object. If the mind acquires concentration on one object, it can be so concentrated on any object whatsoever.

Disciple.— Dhyana of two kinds is found mentioned in the scriptures,—one having some object and the other objectless. What is meant by all that, and which of the two varieties is the higher one?

Swamiji.— First, the practice of Dhyana has to proceed with some one object before the mind. For some time, long ago, I used to concentrate my mind on some black point. Ultimately during those days the point used to be lost sight of by me and I would fail to notice that the point was before me at all,—the mind used to be no more—no wave of functioning would rise, as if it were all an ocean without any breath of air stirring. In that state I used to experience glimpses of super-sensuous truth. So I think, the practice of Dhyana even with some trifling external object leads to the mental concentration of Dhyana. But it is true that the mind very easily attains calmness when one practises Dhyana with anything on which one's mind is most apt to settle down. This is the reason why we have in this country so much worshipping with images of gods and goddesses. And how wonderfully art developed from such worships! But no more of that now. The fact however is that the objects and conditions of Dhyana can never be the same in the case of all men. People have proclaimed and preached among others those external objects to which they held on to become perfected in Dhyana. Oblivious of the fact later on that these objects are aids to the attainment of perfect mental calmness, men have extolled them beyond everything else. They have wholly concerned themselves with the means getting comparatively unmindful of the end. The real aim is to make the mind functionless, but this cannot be got at unless one becomes absorbed in mind on some object.

Disciple.— But if the mind becomes completely engrossed and identified with some object, how can it give us the consciousness of Brahman?

Swamiji.— Yes, though the mind at first assumes the form of the object, yet later on the

consciousness of that object vanishes. Then only the pure experience of "isness" remains.

Disciple.— Well, Sir, how is it that desires and inclinations rise even after mental concentration is acquired?

Swamiji.— Those are the outcome of previous *Sanskāras* (deep-rooted impressions or tendencies). When Buddha-deva is on the point of merging in Samadhi (superconsciousness), *Māra* makes his appearance. There was really no *Māra* extraneous to the mind; it was the external reflection of the mind's previous *sanskāra*.

Disciple.— But one hears of various fearful experiences prior to the attainment of perfection? Are they all mental projections?

Swamiji.— What else but that? The aspiring soul, of course, does not make out at that time that all these are external manifestations of his own mind. But all the same, there is nothing outside of it. Even what you see as this world is neither existing outside. It is all mental projection. When the mind becomes functionless, it reflects the Brahman-consciousness. Then the vision of all spheres of existence may supervene,—यं यं लोकं मनसा सम्बिभ्राति,—“whatsoever sphere one may call up in mind.” Whatsoever is resolved on becomes realised at once. One who, even at the appearance in him of this state of unfalsifying self-determinations, perseveres in watchfulness and freedom from the bondage of desire, verily he attains to the knowledge of Brahman. Otherwise, he who loses his balance after reaching this state, to him come the manifold powers and he falls off from the supreme goal.

While concluding, Swamiji began to repeat uttering “Shiva, Shiva.” And then again he continued, “There is no way, none whatsoever, to the solution of the profound mystery of this life except through renunciation. Renunciation, renunciation and renunciation—let this be the fundamental *mantram* of your lives. सर्वं वस्तु भयान्वितं भुवि नृणां वैराग्यमेवाभयं—“All things on earth are for men infected with fear, *Vairāgyam* alone constitutes fearlessness.”

THE ARUNEYI UPANISHAD.

This is another Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda, and in it are set forth some of the characteristics of the highest class of Sannyasins, the goal being laid down as the realisation of Brahman through perfect renunciation and constant meditation. The Upanishad is cast into the form of a dialogue with a single question to introduce the whole recital in the form of a reply.

ओं आरुणिः प्रजापतेर्लोकं जगाम तं गत्वोवाच
केन भगवन् कर्मायशेषतो विस्ृजानीति तं होवाच
प्रजापतिस्तव पुत्रान् भ्रातृन्वन्ध्वादींश्छिन्वां यज्ञो-
पवीतं च यागं च सूत्रं च स्वाध्यायं च भुर्लोक-
भुवर्लोकस्वर्लोकमहर्लोकजनलोकतपोलोकसत्यलो-
कं च । अतलपातालवितलसुतलरसातलतलातल-
महातलब्रह्माण्डं च विसर्जयेद्दण्डमाच्छादनं च
परिग्रहेच्छेपं विस्ृजेच्छेपं विस्ृजेदिति ॥१॥

I. Om. Aruna's son went to the sphere of Brahman, the Creator, and reaching there said, “Lord, in what way can I relinquish work altogether?” Brahman said to him :— You must give up your sons, brothers, friends and the rest, your hair-tuft and the holy thread, your sacrifices and books regulating them, your scriptures (a), must give up the (seven upper) spheres entitled Bhur, Bhuvar, Swar, Mahar, Jana, Tapas, and Satya (b), and the (seven nether) spheres, viz., Atala, Pātāla, Vītala, Sūtala, Rasātala, Talātala, and Mahātala (c), together with the (whole) universe, and must take on the staff and the scanty clothing of the Sannyasin; you must renounce everything else, aye, everything else (d).

(a) *Scriptures*.—The Karmakānda or ritualistic portion of the Vedas is meant, not the Upanishads, or the knowledge-portion.

(b) These seven spheres are enumerated here in the ascending order, beginning with the Bhur-loka, which is this earth. Satyaloka is the same as Brahmaloaka.

(c) These nether spheres have been named promiscuously without regard to their gradation. 'Giving up all these spheres' means 'giving up the desire to go to these places for enjoyment.'

(d) The repetition signifies earnestness of appeal.

गृहस्थो ब्रह्मचारी वानप्रस्थो वा लौकिकाग्नी-
नुदगाग्नी समारोपयेद्गायत्रीं च स्ववाचाग्नी
समारोपयेदुपवीतं भूमावप्सु वा विसृजेत्कुटी-
चरो ब्रह्मचारी कुटुम्बं विसृजेत्पात्रं विसृजेत्प-
वित्रं विसृजेद्गङ्गांश्च लौकिकाग्नींश्च विसृजेदिति
होवाच। अत ऊर्ध्वममन्त्रवदाचरेद्दूर्ध्वगमनं
विसृजेन्निसंख्यादौ ज्ञानमाचरेत् संधि समाधावा-
त्मन्याचरेत्सर्वेषु वेदेष्वारग्यकमावर्तयेदुपनिषद-
मावर्तयेदुपनिषदमावर्तयेत् ॥२॥

2. The householder, or the Brahmacharin, or the Vānaprasthī (a) should commit the fires that lead to the different spheres (b) to the fire that is in the stomach (c), and consign the sacred Mantram, Gayatri, to the fire that is in his own speech (d), should throw the holy thread on the ground or into water. The Kutichara (e) living a Brahmacharin's life should give up his relatives, and discard his begging bowl, and the straining-cloth, should give up his triple staves, and the fires that lead to particular spheres. (—So said Prajāpati.) Henceforward he should behave like one who has got no Mantrams to repeat, should give up the desire to go to the higher spheres, bathe at the beginning of the three meeting-points of the day, viz., morning, noon and evening, should effect an union with his Atman through the highest concentration (f), and from amongst the (whole range of the) Vedas should repeat only the Aranyakas, only the Upanishads (g), aye, nothing but the Upanishads.

(Now it is being shown who are entitled to Sannyasa.)

(a) Vānaprasthī—lit. one who betakes himself to the forest. A married man who in old

age retires to forest-life either alone or in company of his partner, if she be living, is called by this name.

(b) Commit the fires.....spheres.—The Srutis and Smritis speak of certain fires which properly tended since boyhood lead to particular spheres. It was obligatory on every recognised member of the Vedic community, so long as he lived the life of Vedic works, to keep up these fires as the living emblem thereof. The Sannyasin must give up all such fires uttering the appropriate Mantram, and give himself wholly up to meditation.

(c) The fire.....stomach—the fire or heat that digests the food we eat. According to Brihadāranyaka Upanishad (V. 9) this digestive heat is the same as Vaiswanara, whom the Brahmasutras (I. 2, 24) explain as the Paramatman.

(d) Agni or Fire is considered to be the presiding deity of speech.

(e) Kutichara—or Kutichaka, is the lowest rank of Sannyasins, the other three being Bahudaka, Hamsa and Paramahansa, who are wandering Sannyasins. The Kutichara is a monk who begs in the house of his son.

(f) i. e. this union should stand, in his case, for the religious observances which signalise the three conjunctions of the day-time.

(g) The Aranyakas—lit. portions used to be read in the forests, hence the Upanishads. The meaning is that the Sannyasin should try to realise the oneness of the Brahman as inculcated in the Upanishads, leaving aside the ritualistic portion as having no significance for him.

THE DARJEELING SUMMER CONFERENCE.

(May 21 to June 16).

THE Darjeeling Summer Conference, of which a detailed syllabus was published in this journal in the month of May, held its sittings as announced under fairly satisfactory circumstances. Besides the Guarantee Fund which was subscribed to by friends and admirers of Professor P. Geddes, the fees for membership (Rs. 10—half fee for teachers and students) amounted to about Rs. 1200. Four of the sittings were held at the Government House,

Darjeeling, by kind permission of His Excellency the Governor of Bengal. So far as private reports go to indicate, the lecturers in all the sittings consisted of Prof. Geddes, Sir Jagadish Ch. Bose, Sir Rabindranath Tagore, Mr. J. H. Lindsay of the Civil Service, Prof. Jadunath Sirkar and one or two other eminent men. Prof. Geddes, however, himself conducted most of the class meetings, and the following is a long extract from one of the private letters of a student of the Professor written to the editor of this journal:—

“He divides the great world and its operations mainly into six dramas, namely, the cosmo-drama, which is the whole aspect of the universe taken together, the chrono-drama, that of history, how it is even now and ever along creating itself, the politico-drama, which is about the policies of nations as conducted by their respective experts in the line, the mytho-drama—or the theo-drama, is that of religious or legendary thinkings, and last but not the least comes in the auto-drama, which is the drama of individual life, of religion, of poetry etc. The Professor is a strenuous advocate of nature study and geography in education. He says that the defect of philosophy has been that it has long dealt with mere abstractions. The synthesis, he says, is not in mere abstractions but that it is latent and manifest in the world around us, which we have got to see for ourselves and not through books and other people’s opinions. The most interesting as well as recondite part of his lectures was where he traced the evolution of occupations in the modern world from the miner, the woodman, the hunter, the shepherd, the peasant and the fisher types. He is of opinion that the study of the evolution and deterioration of occupations throughout would go a great way towards the interpretation of the rise and fall of civilisations. It would assist, he says, the permeation of political controversy by sociological enquiry and thought, which is a great sign of the coming times and which nobody can now with profit to himself afford to deny in his plans and programmes for the future.

“The Professor is not only a great sociological thinker but he holds stringent views as regards reforms in the modern educational methods, which he very aptly terms the ‘cram trade.’ He says that in the midst of literacy we are in a state of dread-

ful illiteracy. We study nature and everything else at second-hand and the result is a fearful slavery.

“He advocates the gospel of a return to nature for the governing classes as well as the governed, to survey life in all its bearings, to see for themselves and with their own eyes the evils that rise out of life—to solve the problems of housing, of sanitation, of the unemployed and the misemployed. There must be an organic treatment of the problem of evil, he says. * * * He speaks of the coming sociological friars, who will teach men their duty. The Professor also pointed out the pitiful shirking of social duties by the municipalities. He actually holds evidences of a very definite type of a most woful and arbitrary dereliction of duties in the town-planning way by these our respectful and very popular (sic) bodies. Growth, he emphatically points out, as a subject of study, is omitted in the universities and hence arise all our collective blunders, although individually we are all right and no fools. He is very strong as he ought to be against the mammonisation of occupations in the present civilised age with the deterioration of the cities of the plain going on all around us converting a huge number, alike in the East and the West, into mere money-grabbing leeches.

“He is also trying to accentuate from his researches in botany and other departments of life, a more hopeful view which he thinks would supersede the present dismal view of nature of the scientific men, especially the one that hinges around the theory of the struggle for existence, so largely made a capital out of by Imperialist Germany.

“Prof. Geddes gives his audience the opportunity of discussing problems with him at the end of his talks. He is also conducting excursions for Nature and Town study. He is a very impressive and ardent speaker, although at times almost muttering to himself—‘thinking aloud.’ * * *

“However, as you see from the above—and I have been obliged to make a choice out of his numerous pregnant and significant utterances—that he is no mere idle visionary. He very poignantly feels for the world and the ‘unique situation’ arising out of it and he thinks that he *can* suggest better ways. He certainly has respects for other people’s feelings but not those which we borrow for a nine days’ wonder for the world out of

printed books, and worse, from mealy-mouthed theologians and philosophers.

"The audience are very few—and mostly young ladies. Sir Doctor J. C. Bose delivered a lecture with demonstrations on the 'unity of life' at the Governor's house, Durbar Hall, where Prof. Geddes also delivered three of his lectures. Mr. J. H. Lindsay, of the Indian Civil Service, also gave a talk on his experience of the Bengal village in which 'Dolâdoli' (party spirit) and a total dearth of spirituality in those parts loomed large. (1) Two other gentlemen also spoke. One on agricultural pursuits and the other on elementary Botany.

"Sir Rabindra is going to speak on 'Personality in Art,' to-morrow, Wednesday. In the meantime Professor Geddes is with us morning and evening—an untiring worker in the vineyard of science and sociology."

But the concluding days of the Conference had a shadow of anxiety cast upon them, due to the aggravated illness of Mrs. Geddes who had been tireless in her activities for organising the conference, but who could not enjoy the fruits of her labours because of a sudden attack of dysentery at Lucknow, which developing symptoms of typhoid necessitated her confinement to bed as a guest of Dr. Nilratan Sircar in Calcutta. And there she expired, before she could be apprised of her eldest son's noble death on the battlefields of France and before her husband could hasten back to her side from his Darjeeling work! Mourned by a large number of friends and admirers almost all over India, this noble lady had her mortal remains carried to the crematorium by some of her old acquaintances in Calcutta for whom her Edinburgh home was a favourite resort in the old days of their academic life in Scotland. For about a month in Feb. and March of this year, she had lived at the guest-house of the Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramkrishna Mission, with Miss J. MacLeod, the friend of the Mission, and the breadth of her intellectual appreciation and the sincere sympathies of her heart had endeared her to all the members of the Math, only a few of whom could visit her by her deathbed. A deep sense of personal loss inseparably associates itself therefore in our mind with the memory of the Darjeeling Summer Conference, the very first of its kind that ever took place in this country.

REVIEWS.

The Rigveda-Samhita: with the commentary of Sayanacharya; edited and published by the Vedoddbodhini Samiti, 112, House Katra, Pathargali, Benares. (In parts, each priced at 8 as.)

We have received five parts of this important publication. Besides a running translation of the commentary of Sayanacharya, the learned editors have done everything to make the original texts easy of understanding, adding a clear commentary of their own on them. It is quite evident that the Rigveda has never before been presented to Bengali readers in such an acceptable form, and when we consider how the study of the Vedas had been quite out of vogue in Bengal for a long period of her history, we cannot but proclaim this publication to be of an epoch-making character. The translation of the Rig-veda by the late illustrious Romesh Chunder Dutt gave educated people in Bengal essentially a poor critical view of the Mantras as propounded by oriental scholars through their independent studies. But what we wanted first was a proper introduction into the traditional spirit of Vedic interpretations, for without imbibing this spirit, it is impossible to properly trace the Vedic mainsprings of the whole religious evolution in Ancient India. The Vedas do not demand of us the merely modern spirit of critical study, but to reveal their true significance and wealth they require of us that almost supra-intellectual insight which comes of a deep spiritual, withal historical, sympathy with the institutions, ceremonies and sentiments they deal with. So without a spiritual self-surrender to the true inspiration of the Vedas as transmitted through ages of spiritual seers, a real study of the Vedas is an impossibility. A mind without this proper equipment is bound to read into the Vedic texts any line of interpretations it is itself best qualified to pursue by its own peculiar temperament and education, and the long distance in time combined with the pre-historicity of the forms of expression renders the texts themselves wonderfully pliant before the intensive manipulation of such a mind intellectually keen and clever. So tradition must have to enter into the study of the Vedas as an

indispensable factor of interpretation. In fact the Brahmanas and the Upanishads in so far as they undertake to treat of the Vedic lore constitute the first and foremost commentaries in this respect. Careful study will easily reveal the fact that they form the highest authority for the true traditional line of interpretations, and even commentaries of experts like Sayana or Yaska have to be accepted only so far as they conform to this highest authority. The great merit of Sayana consists in his having recognised this traditional canon of interpretation, and no study of the Vedas can be said to be faithful in spirit unless it makes Sayana the starting-point in developing its ultimate conclusions, even though they may agree to differ in minor cases for the sake of greater consistency. In any way, modern interpretations can only be at best a development of tradition as embodied in Sayana. So the popularisation of Sayana in Bengal must be an important step in the right direction and we earnestly invite all Bengali readers to come forward to encourage this noble literary enterprise with which is indissolubly bound up a real revival of our national self-consciousness in culture and civilisation. For the circumstances under which the present publications have been undertaken are peculiar. The whole work is being carried on by a few poor pundits of Benares fired with lofty ideals and headed by highly-honoured erudite Brahmin scholars. They are wanting in nothing that the task requires of them except the expenses of the printing, and for such expenses they absolutely depend on their well-to-do fellow countrymen who, we assure, can hardly have a better literary cause to support for the sake of their own spiritual welfare than what these Brahmin scholars beg at their doors for. The expenses of publishing each part would at least come up to about two hundred rupees, so far as we can calculate from this distance. The liberality of some sympathisers in the cause, we are glad to see, has enabled our learned pundits to proceed up to the fifth part in their noble work. So we appeal to our countrymen in Bengal to come forward and accept the financial responsibility, each for one part at least, and thus make the enterprise the success that it so richly deserves to be. Proposals are to be communicated to the address given above.

Pre-Mussalman India; A History of the Motherland Prior to the Sultanate of Delhi; by M. S. Nateson, Teacher, Hindu Secondary School, Trichinopoly. Double Crown 16 mo; Pp. 160; price Re. 1-8-0.

This short treatise on ancient history in India, specially meant for school-boys, is no doubt a praiseworthy attempt. True, the ancients in India left no history in the ordinary Western sense of the term, but if, as the author explains on the authority of Herbert Spencer, "the only history that is of practical value is what may be called descriptive sociology," our sacred literature on the one hand gives us all the sociology that prevailed in ancient times and our tradition on the other illustrates that sociology with lives of heroes who lived in the different *yugas*. So if these two sources are properly manipulated, we do not see how a history of ancient India would still be an impossibility. But the real fact is that we are almost sold away to a Western creed of ancient chronology, and with its oracular chart in our hands, tradition reads like a big amorphous tangle of myths. This tradition however is Janus-faced—it has two faces, one of poetic imagery turned towards the untutored intelligence of the masses, and another of deeply significant facts which reveal and explain themselves only to the initiated intelligence which has access into the spirit of events that shaped themselves for the Aryan consciousness. So India has her history, but the readers thereof have not yet come. Meanwhile, feeling their way in different directions towards some grasp of the real chain of events in Indian history, our historians must struggle on to keep their field in possession. Mr. M. S. Nateson brings this struggle and some of its results before the view of our boys in their schools. So far so good. But so long as we cannot offer them any real constructive history, what harm if they are led forward a little to peep into the big museum of shining materials which lie before their future careers under the name of our ancient traditions? Let them learn to formulate their own questions and ply their historical imagination, while real history may wait in their case as it waits in ours.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

THE Hon'ble Kamini Kumar Chanda, President, Ramkrishna Home of Service, Silchar, sends us the following appeal, dated 23rd May, 1917 :—

The public is aware of the flood that visited the district of Cachar and Sylhet, doing havoc to the crops in the month of October 1916. The task of relieving the distressed people was undertaken by the Silchar Ramkrishna Home of Service under the guidance of the Ramkrishna Mission. Nearly 500 families are being relieved by the Home with rice (about 350 maunds up to this time) and cloth.

The months of June and July will, it is feared, be the most critical period for the sufferers. But due to the want of adequate funds, we are compelled to curtail our relief activities, and if we do not meet with immediate response to our appeal for funds from the kind public, the sufferers will be left without any relief.

In the meantime we learn from the "Eastern Chronicle" that the people of Karimganj in the district of Sylhet are in great need of help and we have sent our workers to inspect the situation.

All contributions, however small, will be received and thankfully acknowledged by the Secretary, the Ramkrishna Home of Service, Silchar (Assam).

THE Rk. Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, treated, during April last, 19 indoor patients, of whom 10 were discharged cured, 2 left treatment, and 7 were still under treatment, and 1041 outdoor cases with 1090 repetitions of them. The total receipts of the month were Rs. 279-10-0, and the total disbursements Rs. 367-5-3. Besides the above, 13 srs. of rice and 35 srs. of Dal were received from Mr. Hargovind of Peshwar City, and Sett Hematrai Chuharmall of Shikarpur, Sind, respectively. During the month of May the Ashrama treated 26 indoor patients, of whom 17 were discharged cured, 3 left treatment and 6 were still under treatment. Of outdoor patients there were 1204 new cases and 1451 repetitions. The receipts and expenditure of the month were Rs. 81-2-3 and Rs. 365-4-3 respectively. The Ashrama complains of increased expenses due to war conditions and expects energetic help from the public.

DURING April, 1917, the Rk. Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, treated 33 indoor patients of whom 20 were discharged cured, 1 left treatment, and 12 were still under treatment. The outdoor entries showed 747 new cases, with 2912 repetitions. Besides this, 9 persons were helped with medicines and some of them with diet also at their own homes. They also got doctor's visit free. The building work of the Ashrama is going on. This month's receipts amounted to Rs. 87-5-0 and expenses Rs. 125-9-6 from the general fund, and Rs. 685-10-6 from the building fund. During May the Sevashrama treated altogether 30 indoor patients, of whom 20 were discharged on recovery, 1 died and 9 were still under treatment. There were 691 new outdoor cases, with 2574 repetitions of them. This month also 9 persons were helped with medicine and free doctor's visit in their own homes. The total receipts of this month were Rs. 325-3-9, and the total expenses were Rs. 208-3-6 and Rs. 322-9-6 from the general and building funds respectively. The Ashrama invites contributions to both these funds from the generous public.

THE 82nd Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated with great devotion on the 7th June last, at the Ramakrishna Mutt, Swami Vivekananda Sangam, Pudur, Vaniyambadi. At noon the portrait of Sri Ramakrishna was taken in procession round the town, after which over one thousand poor people were sumptuously fed till afternoon. A Harikatha by Vellore Bagavathar being over, Mr. R. Gopala Chettiar, the Secretary of Amburpet Ramakrishna Mutt read a paper on the life of Sri Ramakrishna before a large audience, and was followed by Mr. C. Venkataswamy Naidu, the President of the Mutt, who spoke on the same subject. Then Rai Bahadur B. N. Krishnaswamy Naidu, who presided on the occasion, gave an interesting lecture on the life of Sri Guru Maharaj and eulogised the activities of the Mutt. After a vote of thanks to the Chair by Rao Sahib P. Ponnukrishnaswamy Pillay B. A., the meeting dispersed with the distribution of Prasadam and Pansupari amid shouts of 'Glory to Guru Maharaj!'